

# Dengue Fever

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## What is dengue fever?

Dengue fever is a disease caused by any one of four closely related viruses. Because there are four different viruses, a person can be infected as many as four times, once with each type.

Dengue hemorrhagic fever is a more severe form of dengue fever, caused by the same viruses.

## How is dengue fever spread?

Dengue fever and dengue hemorrhagic fever are transmitted to people by the bite of an infected mosquito. A mosquito becomes infected with the dengue virus when it bites a person who has dengue fever. Not all mosquito species can transmit the dengue virus.

Dengue fever cannot be spread directly from person to person.

## What are the symptoms of dengue fever?

Symptoms can occur between 3 and 14 days after an infective bite. Dengue fever is characterized by the rapid development of a high fever, intense headache, backache, joint pain, loss of appetite, diarrhea, nausea and vomiting, and rash. The rash develops on the feet or legs three to four days after a person develops the fever. Generally, younger children have a milder illness than older children and adults.

Symptoms of dengue hemorrhagic fever include fever lasting two to seven days and other nonspecific signs and symptoms. As the fever begins to subside, the patient may become restless or lethargic, show signs of circulatory failure, and experience hemorrhagic manifestations. These include the tendency to bruise easily, bleeding nose or gums, and possibly internal bleeding. If not treated, the patient could experience shock, circulatory failure, and death.

## How common is dengue fever?

The disease is common in most tropical and subtropical areas including some islands in the Caribbean, Mexico, most countries of South and Central America, the Pacific, Asia, and parts of tropical Africa. Cases originating in the United States are rare, occurring occasionally in southern Texas and Florida. Usually, dengue fever occurs due to a person developing the disease after they have returned from one of these countries where it is common.

## What is the treatment for dengue fever?

There is no specific treatment or medication for dengue fever. A person who has dengue fever should take a non-aspirin pain reliever, rest, drink plenty of fluids, and see their doctor. Aspirin should be avoided due to the fact that it reduces clotting effects,

aggravating bleeding (if it should occur).

Dengue hemorrhagic fever can be treated by intravenous fluids and oxygen therapy if an early diagnosis is made. Hospitalization is frequently required to manage the illness.

### **Are there complications with dengue fever?**

If not treated properly, dengue fever can lead to death.

### **How can dengue fever be prevented?**

There is no vaccine to prevent dengue fever. The best preventive measure is to limit exposure to mosquitoes – using mosquito netting and repellents and wearing long-sleeved shirts and long pants. Mosquito control in areas where dengue is prevalent is also important, eliminating places where mosquitoes lay eggs (primarily in containers that hold water).

### **How do I get more information on dengue fever?**

Calhoun County Public Health Department  
Phone: (269) 969-6383

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention  
Website: <http://www.cdc.gov/dengue/>  
Phone: 800-CDC-INFO (800-232-4636)

World Health Organization  
Website: [http://www.who.int/health\\_topics/dengue/en/](http://www.who.int/health_topics/dengue/en/)

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This fact sheet is meant to provide general health information and is not intended to be medical advice or otherwise take the place of your doctor's orders or to diagnose your specific health problems. Check with your doctor if you have any questions or concerns about your health.

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